

VERTIGO

FABLES

*Willingham
Buckingham
Lejaloha*



109

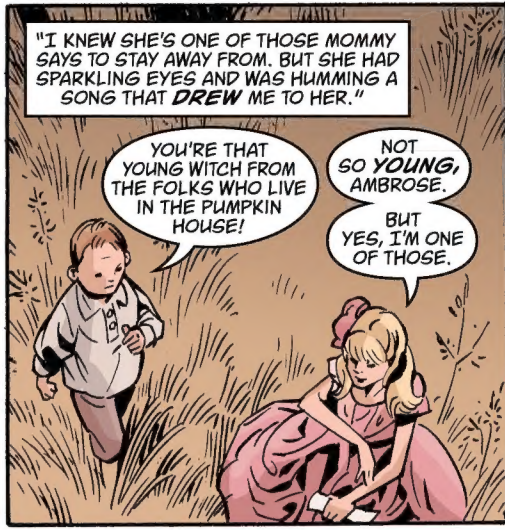
Nov '11
suggested for
mature readers
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"IT HAPPENED BACK WHEN WE WERE STILL AT HOME. I SAW THAT WITCHY GIRL, THE ONE WHO LOOKS LIKE SHE'S ALMOST OUR AGE."



HEY, I KNOW YOU!

"I KNEW SHE'S ONE OF THOSE MOMMY SAYS TO STAY AWAY FROM. BUT SHE HAD SPARKLING EYES AND WAS HUMMING A SONG THAT *DREW* ME TO HER."

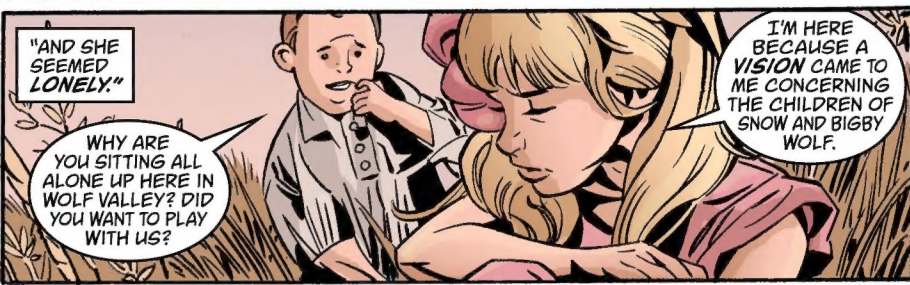


YOU'RE THAT YOUNG WITCH FROM THE FOLKS WHO LIVE IN THE PUMPKIN HOUSE!

NOT SO YOUNG, AMBROSE.

BUT YES, I'M ONE OF THOSE.

"AND SHE SEEMED LONELY."



WHY ARE YOU SITTING ALL ALONE UP HERE IN WOLF VALLEY? DID YOU WANT TO PLAY WITH US?

I'M HERE BECAUSE A VISION CAME TO ME CONCERNING THE CHILDREN OF SNOW AND BIGBY WOLF.

"I THINK I *HAD* TO TALK TO HER, BECAUSE DADDY SAYS WOLVES SHOULDN'T BE *TIMID*, RIGHT?"



I WROTE IT DOWN. NOW I'M TRYING TO DECIDE WHETHER IT'S BEST TO DELIVER IT, OR FORGET IT.

OH?

CAROLINA VIRTUES

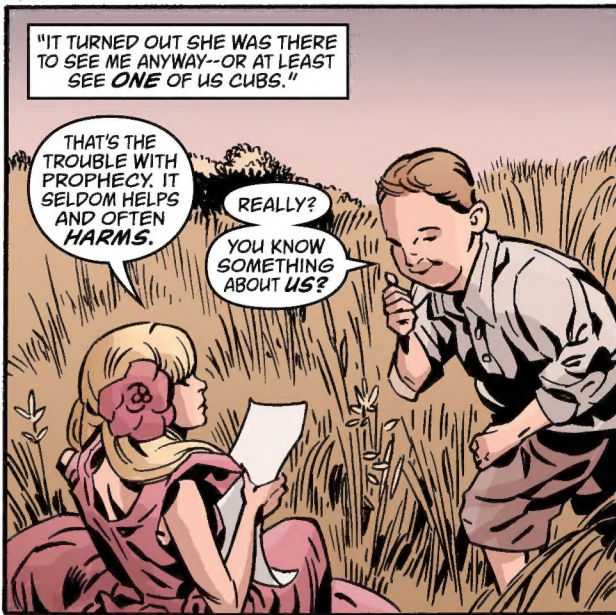
CHAPTER TWO OF *Inherit the Wind*

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"IT TURNED OUT SHE WAS THERE TO SEE ME ANYWAY--OR AT LEAST SEE **ONE** OF US CUBS."

THAT'S THE TROUBLE WITH PROPHECY. IT SELDOM HELPS AND OFTEN **HARMS**.

REALLY?

YOU KNOW SOMETHING ABOUT **US**?



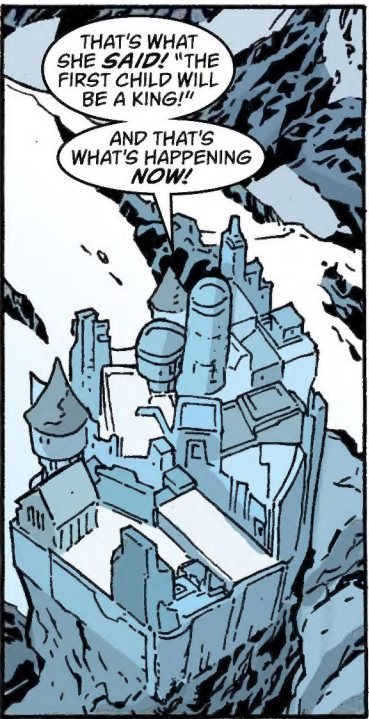
YOU KNOW OUR FUTURE?

OH, YOU SIMPLY MUST READ IT TO ME! YOU **HAVE** TO!



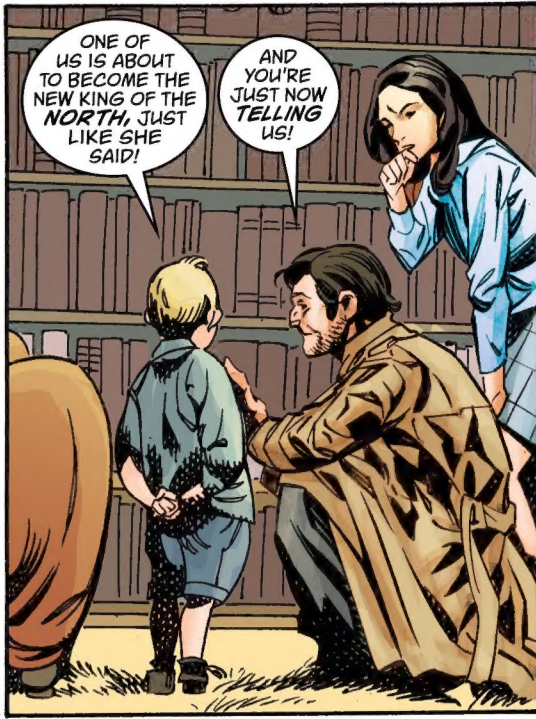
OKAY, BUT REMEMBER **AFTERWARDS** THAT YOU **INSISTED**.

THE **FIRST** CHILD WILL BE A **KING**...



THAT'S WHAT SHE **SAID!** "THE **FIRST** CHILD WILL BE A **KING!**"

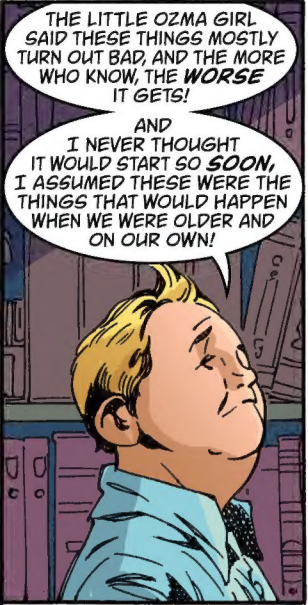
AND THAT'S WHAT'S HAPPENING **NOW!**



ONE OF US IS ABOUT TO BECOME THE **NEW KING** OF THE **NORTH**, JUST LIKE SHE **SAID!**

AND YOU'RE JUST NOW **TELLING** US!





THE LITTLE OZMA GIRL SAID THESE THINGS MOSTLY TURN OUT BAD, AND THE MORE WHO KNOW, THE WORSE IT GETS!

AND I NEVER THOUGHT IT WOULD START SO SOON, I ASSUMED THESE WERE THE THINGS THAT WOULD HAPPEN WHEN WE WERE OLDER AND ON OUR OWN!



THAT'S WHAT HAPPENS TO THE FIRST CHILD. WHAT ABOUT THE OTHERS?

I MEMORIZED THE WHOLE THING BEFORE I HID IT AWAY, BUT IT'S SCARY AND BAD AND--

TELL US ANYWAY.



"THE FIRST CHILD WILL BE A KING, THE SECOND CHILD A PAUPER.

"THE THIRD WILL DO AN EVIL THING. THE FOURTH WILL DIE TO STOP HER.

"THE FIFTH WILL BE A HERO BOLD, THE SIXTH WILL JUDGE THE REST.



"THE SEVENTH LIVES TO AGES OLD AND IS BY HEAVEN BLESSED."

THAT'S IT.

OH, NO.



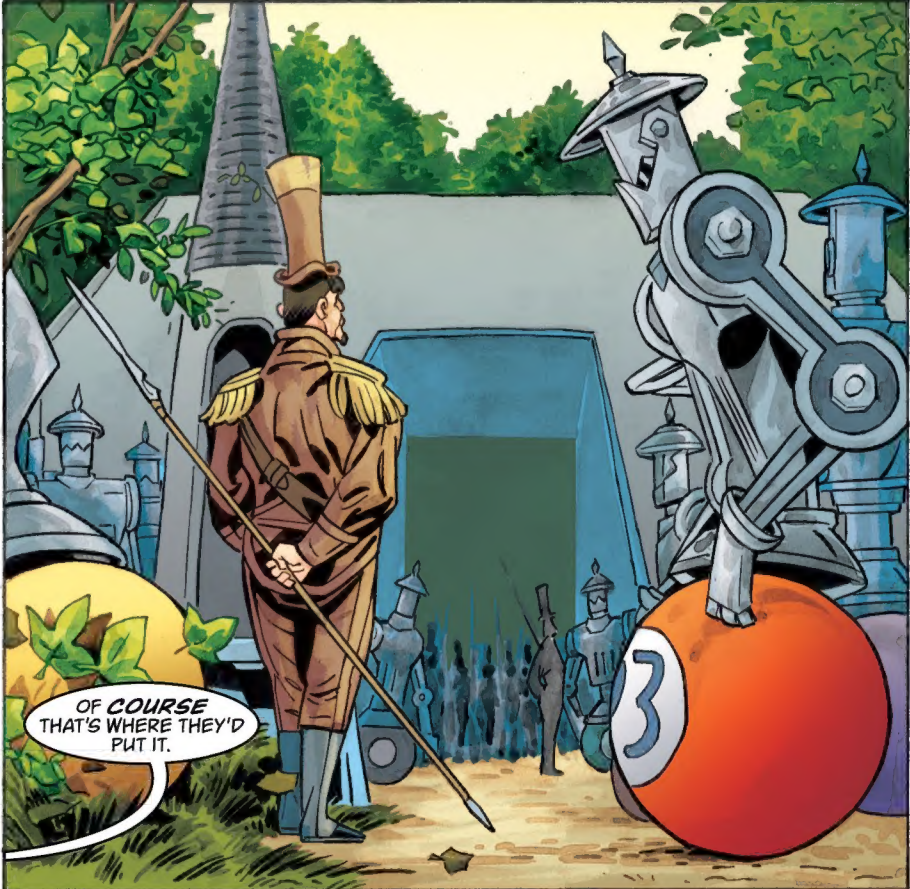
ONE OF MY BABIES IS GOING TO DIE?

HOLD ON, SNOW. WE DON'T KNOW THAT--NOT FOR CERTAIN.



MEANWHILE, IN THE PAN OZIAN EMPIRE, DISTRICT ELEVEN (FORMERLY GILLIKIN COUNTRY)...

WELL, THEY CERTAINLY PUT IT OUT IN THE MIDDLE OF NOWHERE!



OF COURSE THAT'S WHERE THEY'D PUT IT.



AFTER ALL, YOU DON'T PLOP DOWN A BUNKER FULL OF ALL YOUR MOST POWERFUL MAGIC CRAP IN THE MIDDLE OF THE TOWN.

HOW ARE FIVE WEAKLINGS LIKE US GOING TO BREAK INTO A FORTRESS?

OH, I KNOW THE ANSWER TO THAT.



IT CAN'T BE DONE.

WRONGO, MR. MELONHEAD!
THEY SAID ONE DUMB MONKEY COULDN'T CAPTURE THE MIGHTY D'JINN OR KILL THE UN-KILLABLE BABA YAGA!



ACTUALLY, IT'S PUMPKINHEAD.

DUMB?



BUT BUFKIN SHOWED EVERYONE DIFFERENT!

DO YOU THINK HE DOESN'T ALREADY KNOW HOW WE'RE BUSTING INTO THE BUNKER?

DO YOU THINK HE HASN'T ALREADY WORKED OUT EVERY LITTLE DETAIL?



UH...

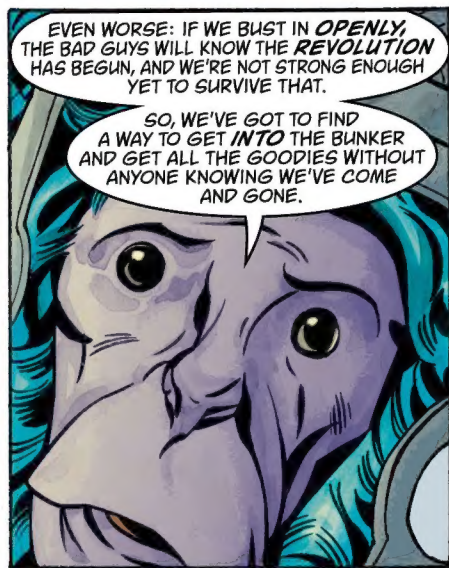


ACTUALLY, I HAVEN'T QUITE WORKED OUT EVERY LITTLE DETAIL YET.

WHAT PARTS ARE YOU MISSING?

UHM...ER... ALL OF IT.

WE'RE DOOMED!



EVEN WORSE: IF WE BUST IN OPENLY, THE BAD GUYS WILL KNOW THE REVOLUTION HAS BEGUN, AND WE'RE NOT STRONG ENOUGH YET TO SURVIVE THAT.

SO, WE'VE GOT TO FIND A WAY TO GET INTO THE BUNKER AND GET ALL THE GOODIES WITHOUT ANYONE KNOWING WE'VE COME AND GONE.

BACK AT THE NORTH WIND'S KEEP...

MY NAME IS BREEZE AND I'LL BE YOUR PERSONAL TRAINING OFFICER DURING THIS PHASE OF THE TRIALS.



HAVE I BEEN BAD?

NOT THAT I KNOW OF. WHY WOULD YOU ASK?

YOU SAID WE WERE DOING A TRIAL.



I SAW A TRIAL ON TV. THE MEAN LADY WHO DRESSES LIKE MOMMY WHEN SHE GOES INTO TOWN WAS YELLING BAD THINGS AT THE SAD LADY.

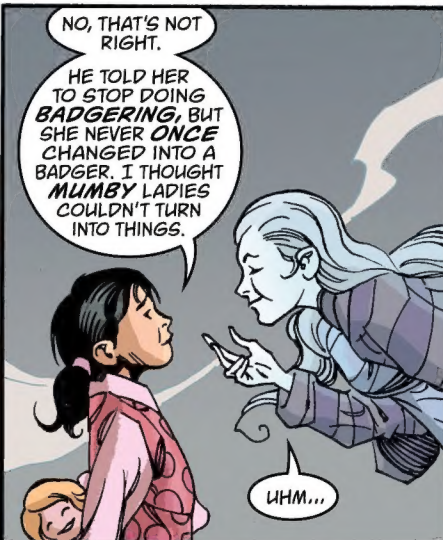
"ADMIT YOU KILLED THEM! ADMIT YOU KILLED THEM!" OVER AND OVER, UNTIL THE SCARY MAN IN THE HEAD-CUTTING-OFF CLOTHES TOLD HER TO STOP BEING MR. STINKY.



NO, THAT'S NOT RIGHT.

HE TOLD HER TO STOP DOING BADGERING, BUT SHE NEVER ONCE CHANGED INTO A BADGER. I THOUGHT MUMBY LADIES COULDN'T TURN INTO THINGS.

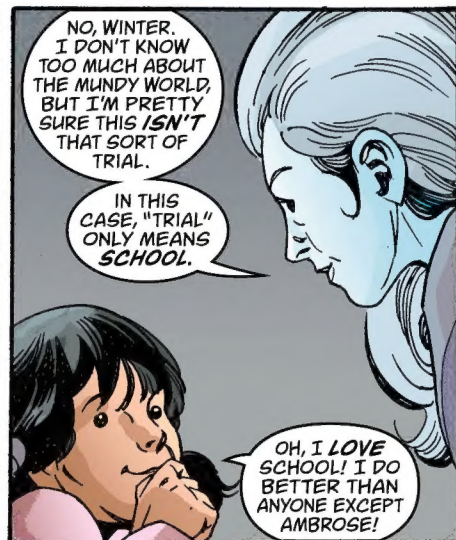
UHM...



NO, WINTER. I DON'T KNOW TOO MUCH ABOUT THE MUNDY WORLD, BUT I'M PRETTY SURE THIS ISN'T THAT SORT OF TRIAL.

IN THIS CASE, "TRIAL" ONLY MEANS SCHOOL.

OH, I LOVE SCHOOL! I DO BETTER THAN ANYONE EXCEPT AMBROSE!





YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE TO LEARN TO DO **MANY** THINGS.

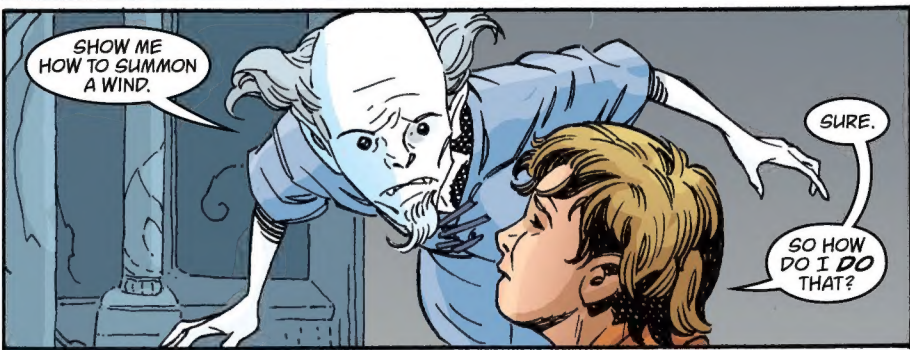
TODAY WE'LL START WITH SUMMONING YOUR OWN WINDS.

OKAY, I CAN DO THAT!



EXCELLENT! SHOW ME.

SHOW YOU WHAT?



SHOW ME HOW TO SUMMON A WIND.

SURE.

SO HOW DO I DO THAT?



BUT YOU JUST SAID YOU CAN DO THAT.

I CAN. I'M **DARE**, THE LEADER OF THE PACK. DADDY ONLY SAID IT LIKE A HUNDRED MILLION **BILLION** TIMES. I'M THE ONE WHO CAN DO **ANYTHING**.

SO THEN...



WELL, DUH! YOU HAVE TO SHOW ME **HOW** FIRST!

ARE YOU SOME KIND OF **STOOPID**?



MANHATTAN, THE CITY RECENTLY KNOWN AS DARKLAND, BUT IT'S BEEN BRIGHTENING DAY BY DAY.

HOW CAN WE BE CERTAIN HE'S DEAD?

LOOK OUTSIDE, MR. HOLT, AND YOU CAN SEE FOR YOURSELF.



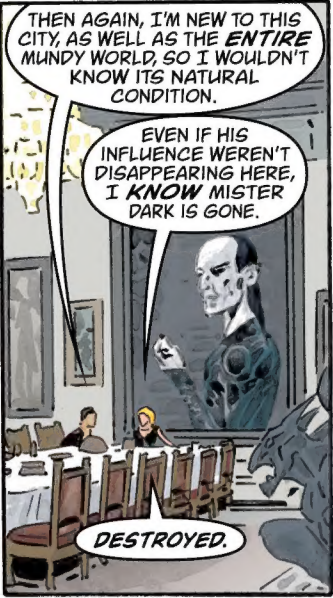
THE CITY IS RECOVERING FROM THE INFLUENCE OF MY LORD AND SUITOR, LOSING MORE OF HIS LOVING SHADOW EVERY DAY.

TRUE, I SUPPOSE.



THEN AGAIN, I'M NEW TO THIS CITY, AS WELL AS THE ENTIRE MUNDY WORLD, SO I WOULDN'T KNOW ITS NATURAL CONDITION.

EVEN IF HIS INFLUENCE WEREN'T DISAPPEARING HERE, I KNOW MISTER DARK IS GONE.



DESTROYED.

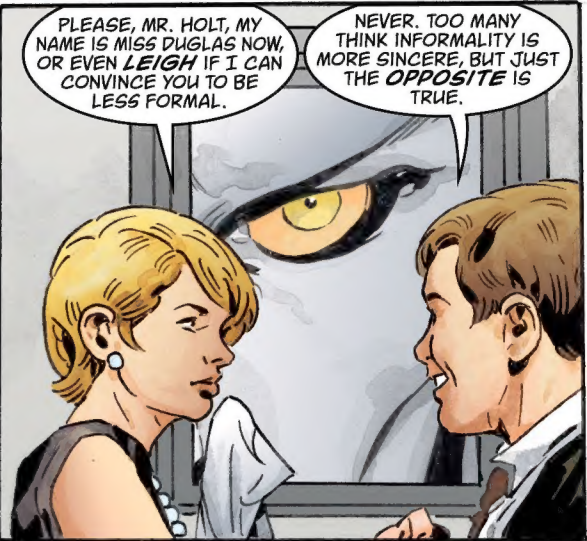
I KNEW IT THE INSTANT IT HAPPENED, FEELING HIS DEATH RATTLE AS IF IT WERE MY OWN.

I HAVE EVERY CONFIDENCE YOU'LL SURVIVE, MRS. SPRATT, AND EVEN FLOURISH AGAIN IN TIME. YOU SEEM THE TYPE TO COME THROUGH ALL MANNER OF HARDSHIP.



PLEASE, MR. HOLT, MY NAME IS MISS DUGLAS NOW, OR EVEN LEIGH IF I CAN CONVINCE YOU TO BE LESS FORMAL.

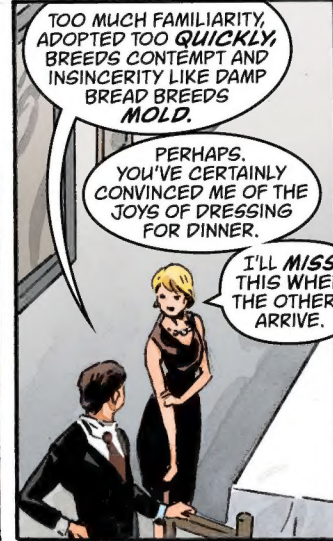
NEVER. TOO MANY THINK INFORMALITY IS MORE SINCERE, BUT JUST THE OPPOSITE IS TRUE.



TOO MUCH FAMILIARITY, ADOPTED TOO QUICKLY, BREEDS CONTEMPT AND INSINCERITY LIKE DAMP BREAD BREEDS MOLD.

PERHAPS YOU'VE CERTAINLY CONVINCED ME OF THE JOYS OF DRESSING FOR DINNER.

I'LL MISS THIS WHEN THE OTHERS ARRIVE.



BACK AT THE KEEP OF THE NORTH...

YES, IT'S QUITE **PRETTY**, MISS THERESE, BUT I'M NOT CERTAIN A DRESS IS **APPROPRIATE** FOR A DAY OF PHYSICAL TRAINING.

WHY NOT? IF THE TRAINING YOU PLAN IS TOO **ROUGH** FOR A NICE DRESS, THEN IT ISN'T SUITABLE FOR A PRINCESS.

AND WHO DECIDED YOU'RE A PRINCESS?

NO ONE TOLD ME, IF THAT'S WHAT YOU MEAN. I FIGURED IT OUT ON MY **OWN**. IF GRANDFATHER WAS A KING, THEN HIS GRAND-DAUGHTER HAS TO BE A **PRINCESS**.

THAT'S A LAW IN EVERY BOOK **EVER**.

AND NO PRINCESS CAN BE TREATED LIKE SOME COMMON **RUFFIAN**. THAT'S **ALSO** IN THE BOOKS.



WILL THERE BE **WRITTEN** TESTS, TOO, MR. PUFF?

NOT EXACTLY, THOUGH IT'S TRUE THE NEW NORTH WIND MUST CERTAINLY BE A MAN OF **LETTERS** AS WELL AS ACTION.



WILL THERE BE MUCH **FLYING**? PROMISE NOT TO TELL ANYONE, BUT SOMETIMES I GET OVEREXCITED AND **PEE** A LITTLE BIT WHEN I FLY.

TRUST ME, YOUNG AMBROSE, ANY PERSONAL SECRETS DIVULGED DURING PRIVATE TRAINING WILL BE KEPT IN **STRICTEST** CONFIDENCE.



MEANOW, BACK IN THE LANDS OF WHILE... *uh...* MAKE THAT: MEANWHILE, BACK IN THE LANDS OF OZ...

WE COULD TRY TUNNELING UNDER THE BUNKER AND DIG OUR WAY IN FROM BELOW.

DIGGING'S HARD. I ESCAPED THE WORK GANG TO QUIT DIGGING.

AND IT WOULDN'T WORK ANYWAY. THE NOMES RULE THE UNDER-WORLD.

NOW THAT THEIR KING IS THE EMPEROR OF EVERYTHING, THEY'RE MORE *INSUFFERABLE* THAN EVER, AND LIKELY TO BE ANYWHERE.

TRUE. ANY DIGGING IS BOUND TO ATTRACT ONE OR MORE OF THEM. AND THEY'RE ALL AS BAD AS THEIR BOSS.

NOT ALL OF THEM!

HUH?


I HAVE AN *IDEA!* ALL WE HAVE TO DO IS FIND THE *ONE* NOME WHO HATES THE NOME KING MORE THAN US!

HERE YOU ARE!

YUH?

YIKES!

OH, NO!



WE'VE BEEN
LOOKING FOR YOU
EVERYWHERE!

IT'S THE
YOOP!

AND RAVENING
MONKEY-EATING
KALIDAHs!

WE'VE
BEEN FOUND
OUT!

AND
DOOMED!
LET'S NOT FORGET
TO MENTION
DOOMED!



THE FARM--
ABANDONED
UNTIL RECENTLY.

AS FAR
AS WE CAN TELL,
THE PLACE IS CLEAN--
UNTOUCHED, IN
FACT.



HALF A YEAR
OF **DUST**, AND SOME
LOST CROPS ROTTING IN
THE FIELDS, BUT MOST OF
THE MUNDY LIVESTOCK
CAME THROUGH
OKAY.

THEY
HAD PLENTY
OF GRASS AND
WATER.

SCATTERED
SOME, I'D
IMAGINE.

WHAT ABOUT
THE DAIRY COWS?
MORE THAN **SIX**
MONTHS WITHOUT
BEING MILKED--



YEAH,
THEY DIDN'T
FARE SO
WELL.

BUT THE
MAGIC SITUATION
COULDN'T BE **BETTER**.
ALL MAJOR ENCHANTMENTS
ARE INTACT.



FROM
WHAT I CAN
TELL, MISTER
DARK SPENT
ALMOST **NO**
TIME HERE.

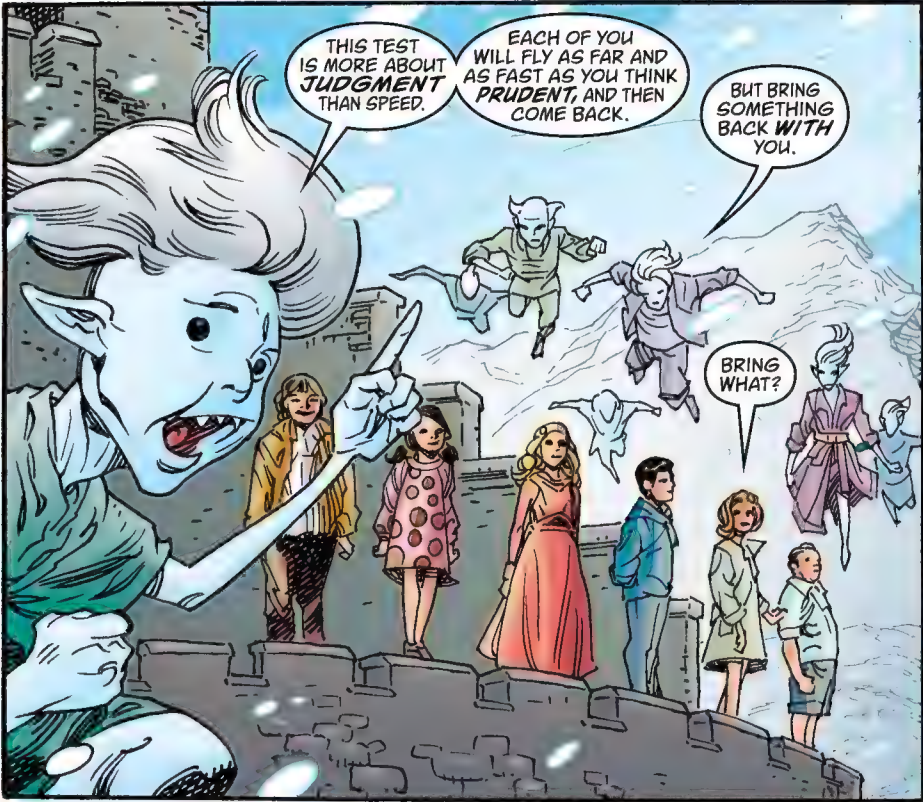
I DON'T
THINK IT EVER
OCCURRED TO HIM
WE'D **SURVIVE** TO
RETURN, SO THERE
WAS NO REASON
TO **WRECK** THE
PLACE.





BACK IN THE WILD AND WINDY WORLD OF THE FAR NORTH...

YES, IT'S A RACE, BUT NOT *JUST* A RACE.



THIS TEST IS MORE ABOUT **JUDGMENT** THAN SPEED.

EACH OF YOU WILL FLY AS FAR AND AS FAST AS YOU THINK **PRUDENT**, AND THEN COME BACK.

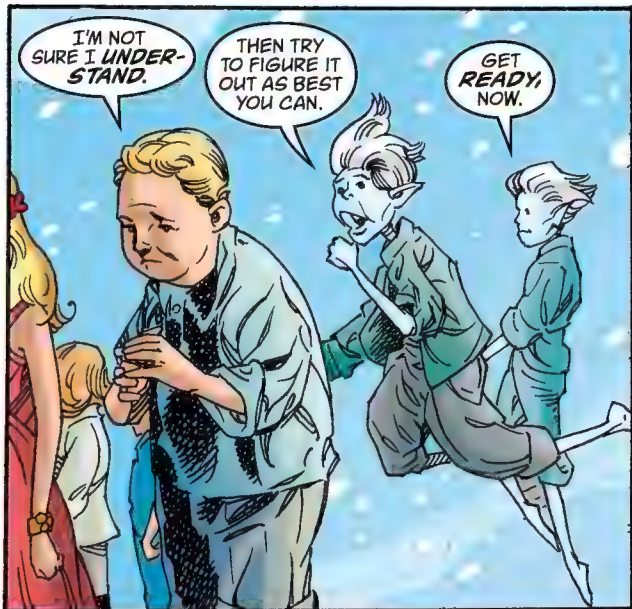
BUT BRING SOMETHING BACK **WITH** YOU.

BRING WHAT?



WHAT YOU CHOOSE TO BRING BACK IS ENTIRELY UP TO YOU.

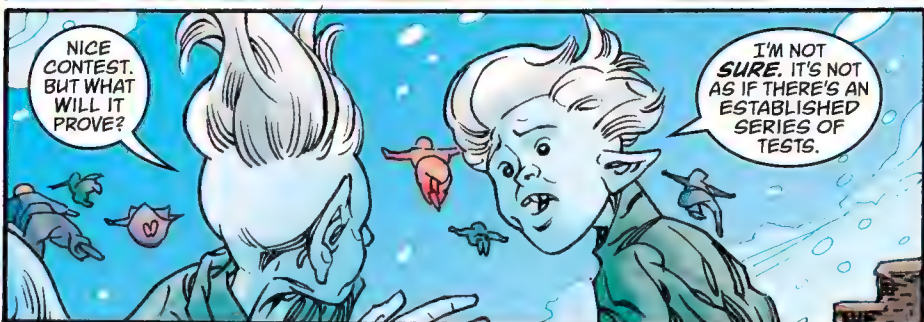
SELECT SOMETHING THAT SHOWS YOU **DESERVE** TO BE THE NEXT NORTH WIND.



I'M NOT SURE I **UNDERSTAND**.

THEN TRY TO FIGURE IT OUT AS BEST YOU CAN.

GET READY, NOW.



MANHATTAN--AN IMPORTANT CITY IN THE MUNDY MAP WORLD.



UHM, LET'S SEE...

ANTHRAX.

RICIN.



CYANIDE.

HEMLOCK.

AMATOXIN.



AND THE LAST ONE?

UH... ARSENIC?

ARE YOU TELLING ME OR ASKING?



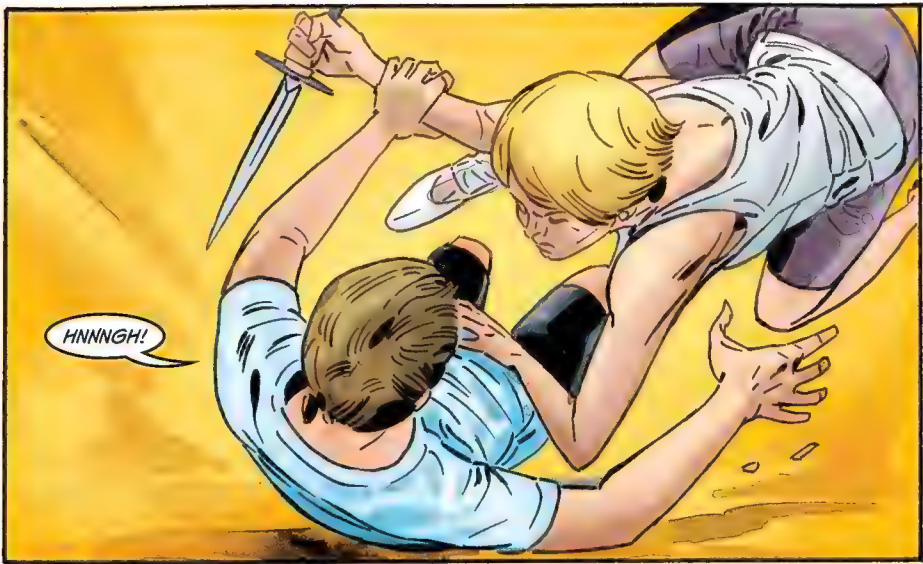
IT'S DEFINITELY ARSENIC.

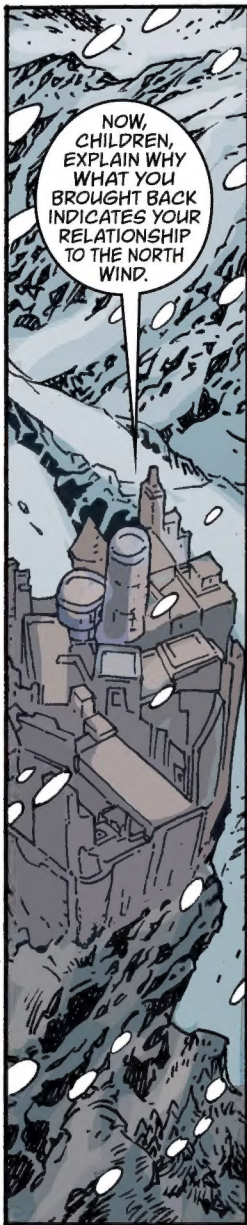
OKAY THEN, CONGRATULATIONS. YOU ONLY MISSED ONE THIS TIME. THE MUSHROOM TOXIN WAS ACTUALLY COBRA VENOM. I ADDED SOME COLORING TO CONFUSE YOU.



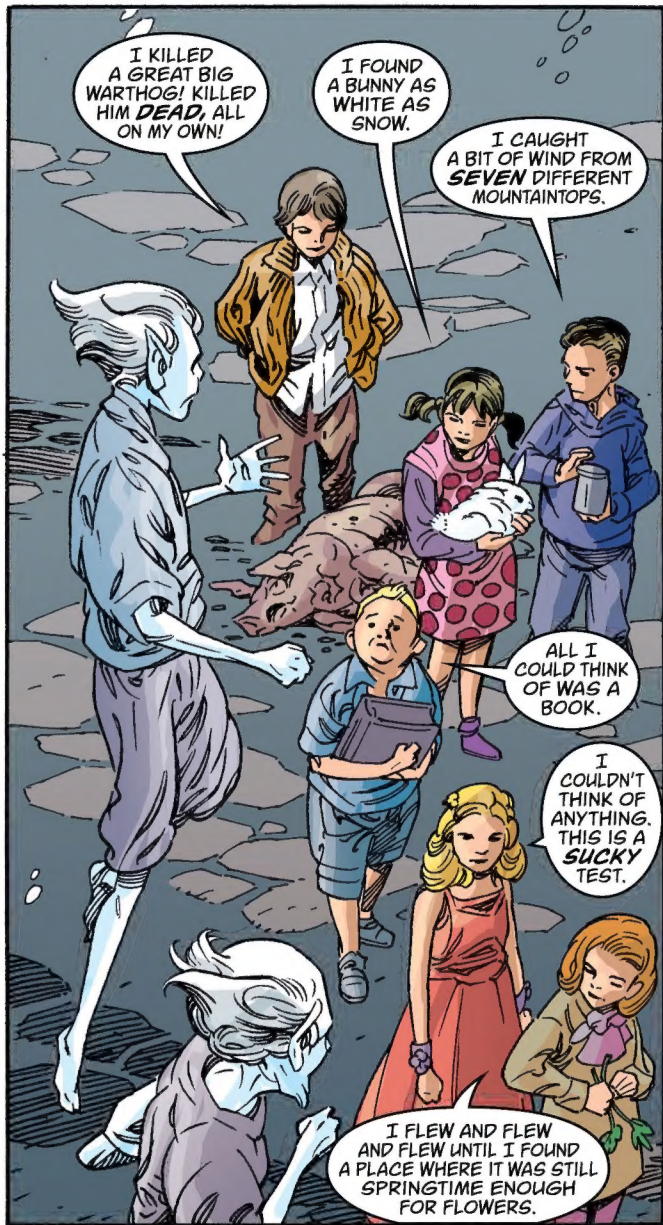
SO, WHAT YOU'RE SAYING IS, I'M GETTING BETTER.

YUH?!





NOW, CHILDREN, EXPLAIN WHY WHAT YOU BROUGHT BACK INDICATES YOUR RELATIONSHIP TO THE NORTH WIND.



I KILLED A GREAT BIG WARTHOG! KILLED HIM DEAD, ALL ON MY OWN!

I FOUND A BUNNY AS WHITE AS SNOW.

I CAUGHT A BIT OF WIND FROM SEVEN DIFFERENT MOUNTAINTOPS.

ALL I COULD THINK OF WAS A BOOK.

I COULDN'T THINK OF ANYTHING. THIS IS A SUCKY TEST.

I FLEW AND FLEW AND FLEW UNTIL I FOUND A PLACE WHERE IT WAS STILL SPRINGTIME ENOUGH FOR FLOWERS.



SOME INTERESTING CHOICES HERE. DARIEN, I SUSPECT YOUR GIFT REVEALS MORE OF YOUR NATURE AS A WOLF THAN A WIND.

MISTRAL! COME QUICK!



THEY'RE HERE! THEY JUST ARRIVED OUTSIDE!

WHO?

"THE OTHER THREE
CARDINAL WINDS
ARE HERE!"

NOW,
COUSINS,
LET'S BEGIN TO
SET THINGS
RIGHT.

AT
LONG
LAST.

DID THIS ONE
NOT TELL YOU THIS
WOULD BE A YEAR
OF PROFOUND
OPPORTUNITY?



NEXT: SETTING A FEW THINGS RIGHT

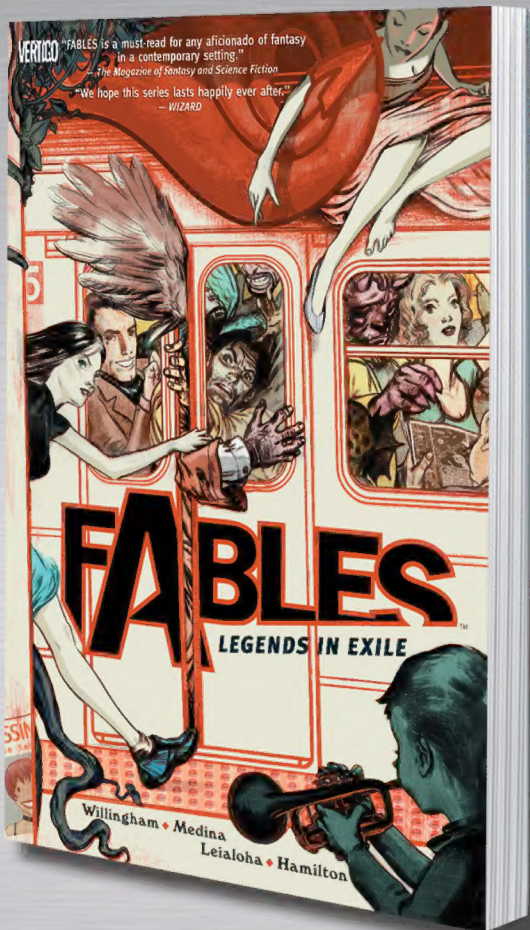
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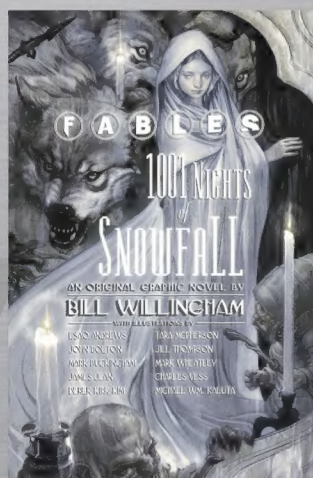
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